

## Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

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FM AMCONSUL MEDELLIN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1001

INFO AMEMBASSY BOGOTA

C O N F I D E N T I A L MEDELLIN 0031

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: CO, ELAB

SUBJECT: ANTIOQUIAN LABOR LEADERS EXPRESS CONCERN OVER

COMMUNIST LABOR MOVEMENT ADVANCES

SUMMARY: UTRAN AND UTRATEXCO LABOR LEADERS TOLD THE CONSULATE THAT THEIR AFFILIATES STILL BELIEVE THE LOPEZ ADMINISTRATION WILL BE GOOD FOR LABOR DESPITE THE ADVERSE IMPACT ON LABOR THUS FAR OF INFLATION AND SLOWER INDUSTRIAL PRODUCTION.

HOWEVER, THE LEADERS EXPRESSED CONSIDERABLE CONCERN OVER ADVANCES BEING MADE BY THE CSTC, ALTHOUGH CITING FEW SPECIFIC EXAMPLES.

ONE CASE OF CONCERN MENTIONED IS THE CURRENT SITUATION AT FABRICATO WHERE A COMMUNIST CONTROLLED NEGOTIATING COMMITTEE IS REFUSING TO NEGOTIATE WITH THE COMPANY ON A SHORTER WORK WEEK. ONE LABOR LEADER STATED THAT UTC IS DISCUSSING THE FABRICATO PROBLEM WITH THE GOC AND IS RECEIVING SOME INDICATION THE GOC WANTS TO COOPERATE. UTRAN LEADERS SAID THEY ARE RECEIVING NO SUPPORT FROM THE UTC AND ARE IMPOTENT IN THE FACE OF THE WELL-FINANCED, WELL-ORGANIZED

CSTC CAMPAIGN. THE UTRAN LEADERS WANT DIRECT US SUPPORT OR ALTERNATIVELY ASSISTANCE IN GETTING THE UTC TO SPREAD SUPPORT DOWN TO REGIONAL FEDERATIONS. THE CONSUL TOLD THE LEADERS THAT IN HIS

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OPINION THEIR ASPIRATIONS FOR US SUPPORT ARE UNREALISTIC BUT THAT

THEIR EXPRESSIONS OF CONCERN WOULD BE REPORTED. END SUMMARY

2. THE CONSUL DISCUSSED THE CURRENT NATIONAL POLITICAL SITUATION

JANUARY

30 WITH LEADERS OF THE UTC-AFFILIATED ANTIOQUIAN LABOR FEDERATION  
UTRAN AND THE UTC TEXTILE INDUSTRY WORKERS AFFILIATE UTRATEXCO.

2. THEY REPEATED ESSENTIALLY THE OPINION WHICH THEY HAD EXPRESSED  
LAST NOVEMBER (MEDELLIN 0363) TO THE EFFECT THAT THEIR MEMBERS  
REMAIN CONFIDENT THE LOPEZ ADMINISTRATION WILL BE BENEFICIAL  
TO THE WORKING CLASS, NOTWITHSTANDING THEIR AWARENESS THAT WORKERS  
HAVE  
THUS FAR BORNE A HEAVY SHARE OF THE ECONOMIC COSTS OF INFLATION  
AND SLOWER INDUSTRIAL PRODUCTION.

3. NEVERTHELESS, THE LABOR LEADERS EXHIBITED A NEW NOTE OF  
CONCERN WITH RESPECT TO THE ADVANCES WHICH THEY BELIEVE ARE BEING  
MADE BY THE COMMUNIST LABOR FEDERATION CSTC. THE UTRAN AND  
UTRATEXCO LEADERS, INTERVIEWED SEPARATELY, EACH VOLUNTEERED THE  
ESTIMATE THE CSTC MAY ALREADY HAVE REPLACED UTC AS COLOMBIA'S  
LARGEST LABOR CONFEDERATION. THEY INDICATED THAT CSTC GROWTH  
HAS OCCURRED PRINCIPALLY AMONG INDEPENDENT COMPANY UNIONS WHICH HAD  
NOT  
BEEN PREVIOUSLY AFFILIATED WITH BANATIONAL LABOR CONFERATIONS.  
HOWEVER, THE LEADERS COULD GIVE FEW CONCRETE EXAMPLES OF CSTC  
ADVANCES  
IN ANTIOQUIA: SPECIFICALLY THEY MENTIONED ONLY THE TEACHERS  
FEDERATION,  
WHICH WAS A NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT, AND THE FABRICATO NEGOTIATING  
COMMITTEE, DISCUSSED BELOW. THEY PROMISED TO SEND THE CONSULATE  
A LIST SHOWING OTHER SPECIFIC CSTC ADVANCES IN THIS AREA.

4. THE FABRICATO UNION IS INDEPENDENT; COMMUNIST AND NON-  
COMMUNIST REPRESENTATION ON THE UNION'S BOARD OF DIRECTORS  
IS ABOUT EVEN, WITH THE NON-COMMUNIST POSITION STRENGTHENED  
BY FREQUENT DISCORD ON THE COMMUNISTS SIDE BETWEEN MOIR AND PCC  
TENDENCIES. HOWEVER, THE UNION HAS NAMED A NEGOTIATING COMMITTEE IN  
RESPONSE TO FABRICATO'S REQUEST TO THE GOC TO REDUCE ITS WORK WEEK IN  
ORDER TO AVOID A CONTINUING AND COSTLY ACCUMULATION OF UNSOLD STOCKS.  
ALBERTO GOMEZ, PRESIDENT OF UTRATEXCO, STATED THAT THE COMMUNISTS  
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HAVE A WORKING MAJORITY ON THE NEGOTIATING COMMITTEE WHICH AS A  
RESULT  
HAS TAKEN AN ADAMANT POSITION OF REFUSING TO NEGOTIATE.

5. GOMEZ INDICATED THAT FABRICATO HAS MADE A SATISFACTORY AND EVEN  
GENEROUS OFFER, CONSIDERING THE DIFFICULT CIRCUMSTANCES THE  
COMPANY IS FACING. THE FABRICATO PROPOSAL CONSISTS OF REDUCING THE  
WORK WEEK FROM 6 DAYS (FOR SEVEN DAYS PAY) TO FIVE DAYS (FOR SIX

DAYS

PAY) PLUS A WAGE INCREASE WHICH WOULD HAVE THE EFFECT OF RECOVERING  
A SIGNIFICANT PORTION OF THE WORKERS' LOST DAY'S INCOME.

6. GOMEZ STATED THAT AS LONG AS THE COMMUNIST CONTROLLED  
FABRICATO COMMITTEE REFUSES TO NEGOTIATE AND THE GOC DOES NOT ACT  
ON FABRICATO'S REQUEST FOR A SHORTER WORK WEEK, UNIONS IN OTHER  
COMPANIES

FACING SIMILAR PROBLEMS WILL BE UNABLE TO REACH NEGOTIATED AGREEMENTS  
THAT RESULT IN SHORTER WORK WEEKS; TO DO SO WOULD GREATLY STRENGTHEN  
CSTC'S PRESTIGE AS EFFECTIVE DEFENDERS OF THE WORKERS' INTEREST AND  
WOULD

FURTHER WEAKEN THE OTHER LABOR CONFEDERATIONS.

7. GOMEZ SAID THAT NATIONAL UTC LEADERS HAVE DISCUSSED THIS  
SPECIFIC SITUATION AT HIGH LEVELS OF THE GOC AND THAT THERE ARE  
SOME INDICATIONS THAT THE LOPEZ ADMINISTRATION MIGHT COOPERATE WITH  
UTC IN FINDING A SOLUTION WHICH DOES NOT REDOUND TO THE FAVOR OF THE  
COMMUNIST LABOR GROUP AT FABRICATO. HE WAS UNABLE TO ELABORATE  
FURTHER.

8. WHILE GOMEZ, ECHOING THE UTRAN LEADERS, EXPRESSED CONCERN ABOUT  
BROAD CSTC ADVANCES, HE STATED THAT THE GOC SEEMS TO BE MOVING  
TOWARDS CLOSER COOPERATION WITH THE UTC, AS THE GOC HAS COME TO BE  
VERY  
CONCERNED AS WELL ABOUT CSTC ADVANCES AND ITS HARD LINE AGAINST THE  
ADMINISTRATION.

9. THE UTRAN LEADERS COMPLAINED BITTERLY THAT THEY ARE IMPOTENT IN  
THE  
FACE OF THE WELL-FINANCED CSTC CAMPAIGN WHICH UTILIZES PAID  
PROFESSIONAL  
AGITATORS AND ORGANIZERS AS WELL AS EXPENSIVE PUBLICATIONS AND  
EXTENSIVE OTHER PROPAGANDA. MEANWHILE, ACCORDING TO THE UTRAN  
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LEADERS, UTRAN IS COMPLETELY WITHOUT SUPPORT; THEIR LAST DIRECT  
FINANCING  
SUPPORT FROM UTC --3000 PESOS (US\$100.00) PER MONTH FOR TRAINING  
COURSES --WAS CUT OFF LAST NOVEMBER. WITHOUT OUTSIDE SUPPORT,  
UTRAN MUST DEPEND SOLELY ON CONTRIBUTIONS AND QUOTAS FROM ITS  
AFFILIATES AND THEIR MEMBERS; AS USUAL, THE LEADERS INDICATED, SUCH  
QUOTAS ARE FAR BEHIND AND NEVER FULLY PAID AND ARE IN ANY CASE  
TOTALLY  
INADEQUATE.

10. COMMENT: UTRAN COMPLAINTS ABOUT LACK OF SUPPORT ARE VERY  
FAMILIAR TO THE CONSULATE AND TO ANY OTHER US OFFICIALS WHO HAVE  
VISITED THEM. UTRAN'S PROBLEMS WITH UTC APPEAR TO BE INFLUENCED  
BY HAVING LANDED ON THE WRONG SIDE IN PAST INTERNAL CONFEDERATION  
POLITICAL FIGHTING AND BY THE MISUSE OF FUNDS BY PREVIOUS UTRAN

LEADER-

SHIP. DEBTS PILED UP BY THE PREVIOUS UTRAN ADMINISTRATION CONTINUE TO PRESS ON THE FEDERATION'S FINANCES, ALTHOUGH THE CURRENT LEADERSHIP PROFESSES TO HAVE MADE SUBSTANTIAL PROGRESS IN THIS RESPECT.

11. WHAT UTRAN CLEARLY WANTS IS DIRECT AIFLD SUPPORT("AS IN THE OLD DAYS", THE LEADERS SAID)OR FAILING THAT US PRESSURE ON THE UTC TO PASS SUPPORT DOWN TO THE REGIONAL FEDERATION. THE CONSUL TOLD THE UTRAN LEADERS THAT IN HIS OPINION THEIR ASPIRATIONS FOR US SUPPORT ARE TOTALLY UNREALISTIC BUT THAT HE WOULD PASS ALONG THEIR EXPRESSIONS OF CONCERN ABOUT CSTC PROGRESS AND UTRAN'S LACK OF SUPPORT.

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